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COMMUNICATIONS

Editor School Review

DEAR SIR :—I have been a reader of the SCHOOL REVIEW from the time of its first publication, and have followed with much interest the discussions on the various phases of secondary-school work. I have been especially interested in the articles relating to courses of study in the high schools.

In the October number of the REVIEW I notice an article by Mr. J. H. Harris outlining a proposed course of study which seems to me open to very serious criticism.

The points which I especially notice are : (1) the inadequate time given to some important subjects, and (2) the lack of economy in time.

Under the first head I notice that only one half year is given to the following subjects : botany, physical geography, physiology, Greek and Roman history, mediæval and modern history, zoölogy, astronomy, geology, civil government, political economy, psychology, and trigonometry.

For some of these subjects one half year may be sufficient if the pupils have been previously well founded in the related subjects which naturally precede. For example, after a thorough course in algebra and geometry a good idea of trigonometry could be gained in that time. Likewise, after a thorough course in zoölogy, physiology, and psychology might well occupy only one half year each.

But the attempt to gain any adequate knowledge of Greek and Roman history, or of mediæval and modern history, or of zoölogy, or botany, if laboratory work is to be done, seems to me doomed to failure. I believe that the interests of the pupils will be much better subserved by reducing the number of options and increasing the time devoted to each.

We find three periods per week for one year none too much for each of the following subjects : Greek history with its oriental connections, Roman history, zoölogy, and botany. Indeed, there is no subject in our course, except drawing and rhetoric which receives less time than that.

The lack of economy in time is apparent when we consider that the course proposed by Mr. Harris calls for about 170 hours of recitation work, if arranged in the most economical way, and no division of classes is required. The work could not possibly be done well with a corps of teachers numbering less than seven. What of the many high schools having a smaller teaching force than this? Shall they attempt such a course as this or reduce the number of options?

In the school with which I am connected the number of students ranges from 105 to 125, and there are five teachers, not counting the teacher of

music and drawing. I inclose a copy of the course of study now in operation which, you will observe, allows considerable choice in electives and calls for only 116 hours of recitation work when classes are not divided. At present eighteen hours more are required for divisions, making 134 hours in all.

I do not present this as an ideal course, but as the best we can do under present conditions. With a larger teaching force I would add more electives as shown in the proposed course which I inclose on another sheet.

I am a firm believer in electives, but not in electives run mad.

Sincerely yours,

M. C. SMART

PROPOSED COURSE OF STUDY

FIRST YEAR (FRESHMAN)

REQUIRED	Hours per week	ELECTIVE	Hours per week
(First year same as now)			

SECOND YEAR (SOPHOMORE)

Geometry, - - - -	3	Latin, - - - -	5
English, - - - -	3	Greek, - - - -	5
Roman history, - - - -	3	French, - - - -	5
Music, - - - -	1	Botany, - - - -	5
		Commercial law and business correspondence, - - - -	5

THIRD YEAR (JUNIOR)

English, - - - -	3	Latin, - - - -	5
Physics, - - - -	3 or 5	Greek, - - - -	5
Music, - - - -	1	French, - - - -	5
		German, - - - -	5
		Algebra and geometry, - - - -	5
		English history, - - - -	3
		Type writing and stenography	5
		Physical geography, - - - -	3

FOURTH YEAR (SENIOR)

English, - - - -	3	Latin, - - - -	5
Music, - - - -	1	Greek, - - - -	5
		French, - - - -	5
		German, - - - -	5
		Solid geometry and trig'm'try,	5
		American history and civics, - - - -	5
		Chemistry, - - - -	3 or 5
		Rhetoric, - - - -	2
		Physiology and psychology, - - - -	5

COURSE OF STUDY IN OPERATION IN STEVENS HIGH SCHOOL

FIRST YEAR (FRESHMAN)

PRESCRIBED				Hours per week	ELECTIVE				Hours per week
Elementary algebra,	-	-	-	5	Latin,	-	-	-	5
English,	-	-	-	3	Bookkeeping, 3	}	-	-	5
Greek history,	-	-	-	3	and				
Zoölogy,	-	-	-	3	Drawing, 2				
Music,	-	-	-	1					

SECOND YEAR (SOPHOMORE)

Geometry,	-	-	-	3	Latin,	-	-	-	5
English,	-	-	-	3	Greek,	-	-	-	5
Roman history,	-	-	-	3	French,	-	-	-	5
Music,	-	-	-	1	Botany,	3	}	-	5
					English extra,	2			

THIRD YEAR (JUNIOR)

English,	-	-	-	3	Latin,	-	-	-	5
Physics,	-	-	-	5 or 3	Greek,	-	-	-	5
Music,	-	-	-	1	French,	-	-	-	5
					Algebra and geometry,	-	-	-	3
					English history,	-	-	-	3

FOURTH YEAR (SENIOR)

English,	-	-	-	3	Latin,	-	-	-	5
Music,	-	-	-	1	Greek,	-	-	-	5
					French,	-	-	-	5
					Solid geometry and trig'm'try,				3
					American history and civics,	-	-	-	3
					Chemistry,	-	-	-	5 or 3
					Rhetoric,	-	-	-	2

Twenty exercises per week required.

To the Editor of the School Review.

SIR:—One is always pleased to add to his store of useful knowledge, even if it be no more than a definition. In the last number of the *SCHOOL REVIEW* there was an article which gave a new content to an old term that we believed was familiar. By telling what the "Philistines" do we are by easy steps led to infer what they are. And what is the "victory" they have won in Minneapolis, and what are their methods?

"They have reduced the teaching force in the high schools one-fourth." Why one-fourth should have been used instead of less than one-fifth, as it

actually is, is a little difficult to determine; for if one wished to be poetic, he might have used "one-half" or "nearly all" with better effect. What are the facts? A number of years ago the board of education of this city passed a resolution that the teachers in the high schools should be apportioned on the basis of one for every thirty pupils in attendance. Unconsciously there had grown up a change in this ratio, until last year it was found to be one teacher for less than twenty pupils. Such a condition may be ideal for both pupils and teachers, but in the stress of financial conditions it was necessary to go back toward the old rule. As this ratio of one to thirty is a trifle smaller than the average of the large cities, over the states, it would seem that there really is a great and glorious company of Philistines scattered through our progressive communities who are guarding against expensive tendencies, and seeking the greatest good for all.

And "they have taken the schools from the high schools list of the state, and at the same time have assumed to charge tuition for non-resident pupils and those over twenty-one years of age." Four years ago the Minneapolis schools were placed upon this list, and in that time the number of non-resident pupils had grown to 260. This fact attests the high estimate placed upon these schools by the people about the state. On the ratio of thirty pupils to a teacher these non-residents were demanding nine extra teachers. Nine teachers earn \$8000. It seemed wise to the board at this time to ask those who contributed nothing to the support of the schools to pay the actual cost of instruction, or \$40 a year. In order to do this it was necessary to drop from the high-school list, as the high schools board have expressly provided that all schools which draw the \$400 shall admit all pupils free of tuition. It may be Philistine to care for the children of one's own community and family before he looks to the interest of all his neighbors' children; but if it be so, the Philistines have one human characteristic.

Moreover, "they have dropped Greek from the course of study." Whatever may be said in favor of Greek, and there are some things to be said, it must be admitted that Greek is losing its hold upon the masses of those who attend college. It is not more than fifty years since all degrees in this country were arts degrees. I am not sure that it is more than forty years. I have tried to get the facts from several representative colleges in regard to the ratio that classical students bear to the whole number in the college. I was disappointed not to be able to get more. But what I have are not selected; I took all there were in the University Library. The University of Michigan shows a slow and gradual change from 1885, when 52.6 per cent. of the graduating class were in the classical course, to 1897, when 34 per cent. were candidates for arts degrees. I have not included the professional schools in making up these percentages, as they have been organized more recently, and it would be manifestly unfair to add the number of graduates in these schools to the whole number of graduates, and it would make the later percentages very much smaller. In the University of Pennsylvania the change

is from 77 per cent. in 1885 to 19.3 per cent. in 1897. In Cornell, which has never been a strong classical school, the per cent. has been only 11.6 for the last eleven years. In the University of Minnesota the same tendency can be noted. From 1873, when the first class graduated, were all classical students, to 1885, 37.4 per cent. of the graduates took Bachelor of Arts degrees. From 1886 to 1890, inclusive, 20 per cent.; from 1891 to 1895, 26 per cent.; in 1896, 24 per cent.; in 1897, 20 per cent.; in 1898, 13.5 per cent. I believe this fairly represents the tendency of modern scholarship in this country. At Harvard, however, the conditions are even more marked than in other schools. Whether the management has been a little radical and unwisely thrown away many of the traditions of the fathers, or whether he has seen with a prophet's eye and accepted the teaching of history, I do not pretend to say. This we know, that in the last graduating class, the classics, including both Greek and Latin, had but fourteen pupils studying them, and that they ranked fiftieth in popularity in that class; even French, German, Italian, and Spanish ranking above them and scarcely anything below. Only 16 per cent. of those who began the study of the classics persisted; while only eight said at the end of their course that they were glad they had taken the classics, and twenty of those who had taken the course regretted their choice. This condition is entirely consistent with the report made to the board of overseers by Charles Francis Adams, E. L. Godkin, and George R. Nutter. They say "the old generation—the masters of the old school—as their criticisms on the changes introduced into the system to which they were accustomed clearly showed, could only in rare individual instances adapt themselves to the new order of things, or appreciate either its significance or its necessity. It is enough to say that it manifestly aims at nothing less than elevating the study of English to the same plane of dignity which has for centuries been the peculiar attribute of the classic tongues. Their exclusiveness in the domain of advanced education is challenged; and a race of young instructors is now at work, whose influence has only begun to make itself felt, but will in the end be little less than revolutionary."

And, then, look for a moment at the record in the high schools of the state. I take all the figures from the "Fifth Annual Report of the State Inspector of High Schools." The enrollment has increased from 9402 in 1894-5 to 11,377 in 1897-8. The number of schools teaching Greek has changed from twenty-two in 1894-5 to seventeen in 1897-8; and this decrease does not include the four schools in Minneapolis which are not teaching Greek this year. The number of pupils studying Greek did not materially change from 1894 to 1898, being 214 and 215, respectively, although the attendance increased 21 per cent. The number of pupils studying Greek was less than 2 per cent. of the pupils attending high schools. To teach this small number of pupils was an expensive luxury, in some cases reaching \$100 a pupil. As a saving was a necessity, and as the facts indicated that the least damage, if any, would be done by cutting out Greek, it was done. And this, forsooth,

is Philistine, to deprive a few of what may be of advantage to them, or may not, in order that the many may have what is essential.

From what he has done, then, what may we infer that a Philistine is? He is one of a large company who lop off extravagant growths where they have shown themselves; he is a man of such marked human feelings that he prefers to care for his own children rather than those of his neighbors; he is one of the few who can recognize tendencies in the growth of an institution, and then has the courage to conform to them, without asking the consent of those few who set themselves as censors of the duties of others. "I thank thee, sir, for teaching me that word."

W. F. WEBSTER

EAST HIGH SCHOOL,
Minneapolis

[It is a pleasure to be able to publish so complete a justification of our editorial in the October number. Mr. Webster does not claim that there was a single misstatement in that editorial. He simply thinks that what was done was right. We could wish that he had been more specific concerning "those few who set themselves as censors of the duties of others." Apparently he means those who do not agree with him, but, if this is the case, we venture the criticism that the word "few" is ill-chosen.—EDITOR SCHOOL REVIEW.]

To the Editor of the School Review.

DEAR SIR:—As the problem of rhetoricals is oftentimes a puzzling one to principals, I have thought that the following experiment, which we are trying in our school with much satisfaction to teachers and pupils alike, might be of interest to other secondary-school workers.

For rhetorical purposes we have divided the entire high school into twelve divisions, corresponding to the number of teachers of whom this kind of work may reasonably be demanded. These divisions, consisting of about thirty-three pupils each, meet once a week—Wednesdays—with their respective teachers for exercise and drill along the following lines and in accordance with the following fixed schedule:

On the first Wednesday in each month, the period is given, in the ninth and tenth grades, to an exercise in spelling. The word-list is made up of words actually misspelled in essays, examination papers, etc., and is contributed to by all the teachers. In the eleventh and twelfth grades this first Wednesday is given either to an exercise in spelling or in pronunciation—preferably the latter. For this purpose words mispronounced in oral recitations, in reading, etc., are used as well as many taken from that excellent little manual *Seven Thousand Words Often Mispronounced*.

It is true, of course, that an exercise but once a month along these two lines is inconsiderable, but it is certainly far better than nothing at all and

must have a tendency to improve the general tone of the school in respect to the primary arts of spelling and pronunciation.

The indirect benefit, we find, is even greater than the direct, and in calling specific attention to these matters a general interest in them is stimulated, and the keenness with which mispronounced or misspelled words are brought to book is very marked and is ample proof of the interest aroused in the accurate use of English.

The second Wednesday of the month is given in all grades to an exercise in reading aloud. The design of this is not to teach elocution—save as elocution is the most natural and most effective method of expression in reading or speaking—but it is designed to drill pupils in the art of reading clearly and expressively; of reading with appreciation and interest what is to be read; of pronouncing correctly and articulating distinctly; of winning and holding the attention and interest of the listeners. We believe this to be a most valuable exercise, and while, as has been said, we have no thought whatever of making elocutionists of our pupils, we do aim to interest them in the arts of appreciative reading and adequate expression.

The third Wednesday is devoted to a discussion of some current question, and may assume the form either of a debate or of the mere presentation of some important event, foreign or domestic. Some specific topic or topics are assigned to two or three members of the division for special preparation, and while in connection with the prepared work, short impromptu talks on the subject in hand may be expected of any. By this exercise interest is aroused in topics of current importance, the current periodicals are read with more zest and accuracy, drill in debate and in extempore speaking is secured and the habit of forming opinions and expressing them forcefully is cultivated.

This period has been found very profitable and has excited the lively interest of the pupils.

The fourth Wednesday is given to rhetoricals proper: that is, to the delivery of recitations, declamations and orations. By this exercise the more formal drill in rhetoricals is secured and practice is given in the more pretentious forms of public speaking. In the selection of recitations and declamations, too, for memorizing, an effort is made to give the pupils material which will prove of positive culture value and be a perpetual source of intellectual satisfaction.

This plan, of course, in no way supersedes the work done in our regular English classes, and is designed merely to supplement that work along certain kindred lines which exacting demands and inevitable limitations of time render difficult of performance.

From time to time, too, we have more elaborate exercises in the large assembly rooms where those who have special abilities along the line of public performance may share in an interesting and profitable program.

By this schedule, then, we have aimed not only to cover the ground

ordinarily included in rhetorical, but to broaden it in such a way as to make it effective in allied fields.

We certainly feel that our rhetorical work now stands for something tangible, and so far as interest is concerned, both on the part of teachers and pupils, there is no comparison with the former conventional method.

J. H. HARRIS

BAY CITY, MICH.
November 19, 1898